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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 20, 2004

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**ROBBER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON
FOR HIS ROLE IN THE ARMED HOLDUP OF A YONKERS BANK**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that VERNON SNYPE was sentenced late yesterday in Manhattan federal court to life imprisonment for his role in connection with the robbery of the First Union Bank on Tuckahoe Road in Yonkers, New York, in July 2002.

United States District Judge DENNY CHIN sentenced SNYPE to life imprisonment without parole, pursuant to the federal "three-strikes" law. The evidence at sentencing showed, and Judge CHIN determined, that in addition to the bank robbery for which he was being sentenced, SNYPE had numerous prior convictions, including three prior convictions for violent felonies.

SNYPE, 43, of the Bronx, New York, was convicted of conspiracy to commit bank robbery following a jury trial in October 2003. The evidence at trial established that on July 6, 2002, SNYPE and William Partlow burst into the First Union Bank on Tuckahoe Road in Yonkers. Each man was armed with a handgun,

and each was fully disguised with masks and gloves. One of the gunmen jumped the teller counter, held a gun to the heads of two tellers, and forced them at gunpoint to put money from their teller stations into a bag. The other man controlled the rest of the bank staff and the customers, forcing them at gunpoint to the floor.

During the robbery, one of the gunmen threw an elderly woman to the ground, and threatened to shoot her 80-year-old husband if he attempted to help her. SNYPE's wife, Marisa Hicks, Hicks' cousin Marlo White, and Cornell McCloud also participated in the bank robbery, staying outside the bank and acting as lookouts. SNYPE and Partlow escaped from the bank with approximately \$35,000.

After the robbery, the evidence at trial showed that SNYPE and Partlow fled from the scene in a Chevy Suburban that had been stolen at gunpoint from a parking lot attendant earlier that morning. A high-speed police chase on the Major Deegan Thruway ensued, and shots were fired at the pursuing police officers from the Suburban. The chase continued from Yonkers into the Bronx, until the Suburban crashed near the entrance ramp to the George Washington Bridge, and SNYPE and Partlow fled on foot. The evidence established that Partlow ended up in a confrontation with the police, and he was shot and killed. SNYPE escaped.

The evidence at trial showed that on July 11, 2002, SNYPE was apprehended in an apartment in Far Rockaway, Queens.

At the time of his arrest, SNYPE possessed, among other things, approximately \$20,000 in cash, much of which was wrapped in money bands that were directly traceable to the First Union Bank at Tuckahoe Road in Yonkers; two loaded firearms; and a wallet containing fake identification (such as a birth certificate, photo identification, and Social Security card).

Cornell McCloud, Marisa Hicks, and Marlo White all pled guilty to bank robbery as a result of their roles in this offense. On February 11, 2004, Judge CHIN sentenced Hicks to 36 months' imprisonment, and on February 2, 2004, Judge CHIN sentenced White to 30 months' imprisonment. McCloud has not yet been sentenced.

Mr. KELLEY praised the dedicated investigative work of the Yonkers Police Department, the New York City Police Department, and the FBI's Violent Crime Squad in White Plains.

Assistant United States Attorney LAURA GROSSFIELD BIRGER is in charge of the prosecution.

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